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SOURCE

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Radio Listening Habits

1. Source had practically no opportunity to listen to foreign broadcasts while in the military service. A friend told him that sometimes the mechanics and pilots are able to listen to foreign stations on the earphone sets in the MIG's. Sometimes he listened to foreign programs when home on leave. He did not make any clear distinction between stations. He liked the RFE Programs which gave the names of Communists. Such programs helped public morale by giving people grounds for believing that underground anti-régime activities were being carried on. The main sources of reliable foreign news for men in the military service were married soldiers who lived with their families off base and there listened to foreign stations, and visits from relatives who listened to foreign broadcasts.

Attitudes toward the "New Course"

2. Source thought that the "New Course" was simply Czechoslovakia's NEP. The USSR had had its NEP in the early stages of its Communist revolution; Czechoslovakia was now going through the same stage. For this reason, Source believed that in the short run the "New Course" represented a genuine change of policy and that, in the time that Czechoslovakia was going through its NEP period, the government would actually carry out many of its promises of liberalization. He thought that in agriculture the change of line had already gone so far that peasants could now freely leave the cooperatives. As he had no relatives or friends from the farms who could tell him how little real

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change of policy there was in agriculture, his views can be taken as those of the average uninformed city dweller. He thought that the government was going to permit private individuals to set up one-man shops again, especially in small towns. For example, tailors and blacksmiths would be allowed to operate on their own again. Because the government's policy, like the NEP, was only a temporary one, however, Source was convinced that life in Czechoslovakia would not be better in the long run, but would get still worse. 1.

Czech-Slovak Relations

3. Source was not very interested in what happened to the Slovaks. If Czechoslovakia were liberated, he thought both nationalities should join a federal Europe. He didn't care whether the Slovaks joined with the Czechs, joined separately, or stayed out. Before Czechoslovakia was founded there had been nothing in Slovakia. The Czechs had paid for the development of Slovakia and had got nothing to show for it. Relations between Czechs and Slovaks in Source's military unit were satisfactory.

Soviet Advisers

4. [redacted] /March 1953/ there was one Soviet officer as an adviser to the commander of the air division, whose headquarters were located at Line. In the summer of 1953, one Soviet was assigned to each of the air regiments, so that there were four of these officers, all lieutenant colonels or colonels, at Line. The name of one of the Soviets was Colonel (fnu) CHIMURCHKIN. [redacted] in an office where he sometimes saw one of the Soviets. The Soviet never gave any orders but made his wishes felt through the Czech commander. On one occasion the Soviet was inspecting flight records and discovered a great discrepancy between the hours flown as marked in the pilots' registers and as marked in the mechanics' reports on the aircraft. The Soviet told the Czech regimental commander of this, and the latter told another Czech colonel in charge of technical questions, who in turn appointed a commission of seven members to study the question. From this commission, [redacted] superior received orders to prepare statistics on the subject for a one-year period. [redacted] was supposed to do the work but he complained to the lieutenant, who told his colonel, that the records were so faulty that the job couldn't be done. Though the Czech colonel replied that the work must be done, it was in fact never done.

Morale in Armed Forces

5. Source said that in the event of war, when it would be known that the sacrifice would be worthwhile, half of the pilots would try to fly to the West. Ninety per cent. or more of the pilots were Party members. Source never heard of any planes being shot down while attempting to escape. Sometimes what may be anti-regime behaviour of members of the armed forces is not punished because the superior officers know that they might themselves be punished if the facts became known to higher headquarters. For example, a soldier on pass was discovered to have taken his sub-machine gun with him. No general report was issued and after having overstayed his leave by two days, the soldier returned to his unit. He pretended to have taken the gun with him out of stupidity. Hardly anyone believed this explanation, but the soldier was given only 15 days' confinement. A severe sentence would have meant turning the case over to a higher military court, which might also have

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punished others than just the soldier. One time at Christmas or New Year's at Line some soldiers who were drunk got into an argument with the officer of the day. The soldiers were ordered confined. When the case became known to higher headquarters, so many officers up the hierarchy received punishments or reprimands on account of the incident, that the commissioned officers actually received more punishment taken together than the enlisted men responsible for the incident.

6. The personnel at the Line air base were restricted to the base for about two weeks after Stalin died and for a week or so after the currency reform.

Views on International Relations

7. Source thought that a war is almost inevitable. It would probably start in the Far East, perhaps in Indo-China. US mechanics would not be enough to turn the tide and France alone could not win, so the US would eventually have to send an army in order not to lose this key to Asia. China would then send its troops, and a general war would be on. He also thought a Korea-style civil war between East and West Germany a possible source of a new world war.
8. He did not believe that there has been any significant change in Soviet foreign policy since Stalin died. He thought that time was working both for and against the Soviets: for because they can arm still further and train still more soldiers with more time; against because the Soviet superiority in existing stocks of arms decreases as the arms become out-of-date and because people become more anti-Communist the longer they experience Communism.
9. An upset from inside the Communist countries is out of the question. Source thought that even the defection of, say, one complete army division in a country like Czechoslovakia would not be enough to set off a successful chain-reaction liberation movement. He thought that the three most important men in Czechoslovakia were, in that order, CERNICKA, ZAPOTOCKY, and SIROKY, but that none of these was actually a leader in his own right. All were simply stooges of the Soviets.
1. Comment: [redacted] identification of the "New Course" with the NEP no doubt helps people keep a properly skeptical attitude toward Communist promises, but from the West's point of view it has the disadvantage of persuading people that, for several years at least, the Communists genuinely intend to follow a NEP-type policy. Since it is not at all certain that the Communists in Czechoslovakia really do intend even in the short run to act in the spirit of their promises, foreign comment on the "New Course" should treat the "New Course"-NEP parallel with care.

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